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Gilas' 'public' freeway meetings not so public

Jun. 14, 2006 12:00 AM

Gila River Indian Community landowners and residents have agreed to a series of "public" meetings to discuss the possibility of building the South Mountain Freeway on reservation land.

Just how public these public meetings will be remains to be seen.

After two *Arizona Republic* reporters showed up at a meeting on the matter Saturday, the group immediately voted to exclude outside news media.

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The reporters were forced to leave.

Nat Percharo, chairman of a group that represents owners of about 1,300 acres on the reservation south of Ahwatukee Foothills, said the public hearings likely would be for Gila River Indian Community members only.

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Hello Ahnnald . . . Gov. Janet Napolitano and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger are scheduled to sit down and chat for 30 minutes in Sedona today. The

topics: National Guard troops at the U.S.-Mexico border and illegal immigration. The Governor hasn't been a big fan of putting Guard troops near the border because he thinks the men and women of the Guard are stretched too thin. (California pundits think it has more to do with winning a big chunk of the Latino vote.)

The two are in Sedona for a meeting of the Western Governors Association. Don't expect Schwarzenegger to stick around for photo ops. We hear his office wants to keep the meeting on the down low.

Compiled by Joseph Garcia, Chip Scutari and Robbie Sherwood.

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